

THE 1607/1675.
Necessity and Profitableness
OF
GOOD WORKS,
ASSERTED;

IN A
SERMON

Preached at *Kirkaldy*, April 12. 1724.

By Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE,
Minister of the Gospel at *PORTMOAK*.

2 Cor. vii. 1. *Having therefore these Promises, dearly Beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.*

Rev. xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in thorow the Gates into the City.*

John vii. 17. *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.*

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To the READER.

Candid Reader,

I Was once designed, in a Preface to this Sermon, to have taken particular Notice of a Pamphlet emitted at the Down-sitting of the last Assembly, May 1726, Intituled, Marrow-Chicaning display'd, &c. and to have discovered at some Length the gross Calumnies, false Alledgances, and bitter Invectives of that anonymous Author : But considering, that, while the Assembly was sitting, there was a publick printed Advertisement dispersed, and affixed to the Cross of Edinburgh, the Gates of the Assembly-house, and other publick Places, the Tenor whereof follows,

(Edr, May 14th, 1726.)

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT being supposed that an ENEMY, under the Mask of a Lover of Peace and Truth in this Church, hath been the Author of the scurrilous Pamphlet lately published, viz. MARROW-CHICANING DISPLAY'D, &c. He

is hereby charged to discover himself, if he DARE set his Face to his groundless Jealousies, false Alledgances, gross Misrepresentations, and bitter Invektives; which, if he do not, he must be reputed a GROSS SLANDERER: And, if he do, he shall find his alledged Facts disprov'd to his Conviction. But, in the mean Time, for a Swatch to satisfy the World, the following Particular is here published.

Whereas there is a Pamphlet published of late, intituled, MARROW-CHICANING DISPLAY'D, &c. wherein it is asserted, P. 43. " That George (by a Mistake called James) Fergusson Weaver in Kirkaldy, having desired a Line from Mr. Drysdale late Minister there, in order to his Partaking of the Lord's Supper last Year at Portmoak, was refused, because of his frequent Drinking, and beating of his Wife: To which the said James is said to have replied, *I care not whether you give me a Line or not, I'll get a Token without one.* "

That the World may know what Credit is to be given to this Author and his Assertion of Facts, it is judged proper, for the Vindication of George Fergusson, whose Character is wounded, to insert the following Testimonial.

" These

These are testifying, That the Bearer
 hereof, *George Fergusson* Weaver in
Kirkaldy, born and bred in this Parish, is
 an honest Man, free of publick Scandal or
 Church-censure, has had a sober Christian
 Conversation, having six Children bapti-
 zed by our late Ministers, and admitted to
 all sealing Ordinances, and is no Drunkard
 or Beater of his Wife, as is said in a late
 Print. In Witness whereof, we have
 subscribed thir Presents at *Kirkaldy*, May
 11th, 1726."

Ja. Kay, Elder.

Will. Murray, Elder.

Ja. Dick, Elder.

As also, with respect to the foresaid Para-
 graph, *Alexander Campbell*, Elder in *Kirkaldy*,
 declares, "That, at *Portmoak* Sacrament last
 Year, he gave a Token to the said *James*
 alias *George Fergusson*, having a written
 Warrant from the late *Mr. Drysdale*, to
 give Tokens to any in *Kirkaldy* whom he
 judged worthy. And that this Declaration
 is Genuine, is attested by us Undersubscri-
 bing Witnesses, in whose Presence the said
Alexander Campbell gave it, at *Kirkaldy*,
 May 7th, 1726."

George Sibbald Witness.

James Wilson Witness.

In which Advertisement, my unknown Adversary is openly challenged to discover himself, and two of his pretended Facts disproved, to the Conviction of the World. And seeing the Author has still thought fit to lurk, and dare not set his Face to what he has written, my best Friends thought it would be an unnecessary Expence of Time and Pains, and too great a Honour done the Author, to take any further Notice of him, or of his scurrilous Print; seeing, according to his Way of Doing, One may forge what he pleases, and from behind the Curtain throw Dirt on the most Innocent, while he shuts up himself in inaccessible Darkness. When I was attacked by a known Adversary in the Face of the Commission last Year, I lookt on my self as obliged to vindicate my Character as I had Access: But to offer a Confutation of a nameless Author, already convicted of palming notorious Falshoods on the World, and taking Guilt to himself by declining to own his Assertions, were but Labour in vain; seeing, according to the common Proverb, The Tongue or Pen of such a Person is no Slander. He that will tell a Lie in one Instance, will make no Bones of doing it in a Hundred, if it can serve his Turn.

However, I do hereby intimate, That if any Man of known Veracity and Integrity will be so fair and candid, as to own himself the Author of the said Pamphlet, under his Hand, or before famous Witnesses, I shall then be in no Strait how

to vindicate my self against his Aspersions: But, till then, I am perswaded no true Citizen of Zion will take up a Report on his Credit and Authority; especially considering that it is obvious to every Reader, that the Pamphlet is written (*animo calumniandi*) with a stated Design to calumniate, which is reckoned sufficient in Courts, both Civil and Ecclesiastick, to cast the Testimony of any Witness. *Adieu* Time, the World cannot miss to see, that this Author's Performance looks like the last Effort of a desperate Cause, founded upon the old Machiavelian Principle, (*Calumniare audacter, & aliquid adhaerebit*) Reproach boldly, and something will stick. Only, for the Sake of those to whom I may be unknown, if any shall give themselves the Trouble of conversing with me personally concerning the Allegations of this Author, I hope to convince them, that they are either gross Falshoods, or invidious Misrepresentations of Facts.

When I joined with my Representing Brethren, in lifting up the Banner of Truth, I studied through Grace to lay my Ministry, Name, and worldly All, at the Lord's Feet, accounting for the worst that either Hell or Earth could do me on that Head; and therefore such Blasts of Calumny are no Surprise to me. I did indeed enjoy something of a Calm, while that worthy Servant of Christ, Mr. James Bathgate, lived; the Speat of Reproach having run principally against him, in thir Bounds: But no sooner was
he

be called off the Stage, but I found the Storm breaking on me. I do own, since that Time the Archers have shot at me, and grieved me, and perhaps wounded my Character also with some: But I rejoice that the Bow of Divine Truth abides in its Strength; and I do believe that it shall abide so, by the Hands of the Mighty God of Jacob; even tho' some who own it may be separated from their Brethren, and held for Signs and Wonders in Israel. To suffer Reproach for the Cause of Christ, and his Truth, I reckon not only an Ornament, but a Treasure: And the Author of the above Pamphlet has done me; I conceive, a particular Honour, in directing his calumnious Letter to me; and I do bind every Scoff and Calumny in it as a Chain of Gold about me, glorying, that I in particular am counted worthy to suffer Reproach in so glorious a Cause; whatever he, or Others acted with the same Spirit, may think of it.

As to the following Discourse, it is one of these for which I am become a Debtor to the Publick, on the Occasion mentioned in the Preface of that upon Rev. iii. 4. Altho' I am abundantly sensible of my lame Management of this important Subject, yet I am not conscious of swerving in any one Point of Doctrine from the Word of God, and the approved Standards of this Church; and if in the least Iota I have departed therefrom, either in this or any other of these Sermons charged with

with Heterodoxy, I am so far from pretending to Infallibility, that I hope I shall never be ashamed publickly to retract what upon Conviction shall be found to be amiss.

I look upon it as one of the most difficult Things that belong to us who are Ministers, in the Dispensation of the everlasting Gospel, so to divide the Word of Truth, as to deliver it in the Order and Connexion wherein GOD has laid it in the New Covenant. Undistinct Views here, cannot miss to lead both our selves and Hearers into a Maze and Labyrinth of Confusion, and exceedingly marr the Sweetness of Divine Truth, with the Success of the Gospel. Every Truth of God, even in itself and abstractly considered, is precious: But the Beauty, Lustre, and Sweetness of Divine Truth is never seen or felt, until the Truth be known as it is in JESUS. All the Truths of Divine Revelation meet in Him, as the Beams in the Sun, or as the Spaike of a Wheel in their Centre; insomuch that if any Truth of God be handled, or any Duty of the Law inculcate, abstractly from Him, it is taken out of its proper Place where God has set it, and consequently cannot miss to lose its Savour and Beauty: And therefore it was not without Ground the Apostle expressed himself, as we have it, 1 Cor. ii. 2. I desire to know nothing among you, but Christ, and Him crucified. He is the glorious Foundation laid in Zion, and another Foundation can no Man lay; and if,

in building, we do not keep our Eyes continually on this Chief Corner-Stone, we cannot shun to make very confused and irregular Work. In a particular Manner, when we inculcate good Works upon our Hearers, if we do not lead them in the first Place to work that great Work of God, namely, to believe in Him whom He hath sent, we do but press them to build Castles in the Air, which fall down as fast as they are reared up. All our Works will be found to be but empty Cyphers in the Day of the Lord, if this Foundation be not first laid. The Root on which they grow, namely, that of the old Adam, being Rottenness, the Blossom cannot miss to go up as the Dust.

It is the Ruin of Thousands in the visible Church, that whenever the Law of God has pricked or wounded their Hearts, and brought them under any Concern for Salvation; that, being married to the Law as an Husband, they run so it for Reilef: Hence 'tis the ordinary Dialect of awakned Sinners, before the Revelation of the Remedy, What shall we do? or, What good Thing shall we do to inherit everlasting Life? And accordingly they fall a doing and working, and there they rest; by which Means, these very Duties, which should lead them to Christ, prove a Bar and Hindrance of their Coming to Him: But, since the Fall of Adam, the Law was never given to Man with a Design that he should rest or stay in it, but that Man by the Law might be carried

carried forth to Him, who is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believes. I own, that they, who rest in the Law and its Works, may find some Sort of Peace and Ease for a while ; but true, solid and lasting Peace can never be found on this Side of Christ.

We do not read of any Plaister, that the stung Israelites were to make use of, for their Healing, but only Looking to the Brasen Serpent : If they had made a Confection of the best Herbs in the Wilderness, or a Plaister of all the sovereign Ingredients in the World, and withal heaped up Mountains of Prayers, or poured out Seas of Tears, all would not have helped, if they had not looked unto the Brasen Serpent ; GOD had appointed that as the only Way of Relief, and therefore nothing else could perform the Cure : So here, GOD hath set up His CHRIST, as the only Way of Life ; He hath lifted Him up, upon the Pole of the Gospel, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have everlasting Life. And tho' we should spend our whole Time and Strength, in Praying, Mourning, and other Acts of Obedience, all would be of no Avail, unless we made use of GOD's REMEDY, in a Way of Believing, and that is, Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all ye Ends of the Earth, Isa. xlv. 22.

But say ye, By this Means, we may lay aside Praying, Reading, Hearing, and other Duties of Obedience altogether. I answer, By no Means ;

I don't bid you quit Duties, but only as a Plaister for healing your Wounds, or as a Ground of Acceptance. Duties indeed are subservient unto the Cure, but they themselves are not the Cure: For Instance, Prayer is a Seeking of the Cure, but not the Cure itself; in Reading and Hearing, we are directed how to come at the Cure, but these are not the Cure. We would reckon it a Pieec of prodigious Folly, for One in Distress to reckon himself healed, merely upon his seeking and getting a Physician's Advice, tho' he never apply the Remedy prescribed. By our Works of Obedience, before Conversion, like the Man lying at the Pool, we only study to have a Deportment suitable unto these who wait for Divine Mercy; and by our Obedience, after Conversion, we only express our Gratitude for the Cure, which He in his sovereign Grace hath wrought by the Spirit's Application of the Blood of JESUS: But still these Works of Obedience, whether before or after Conversion, are not the Cure; It is a known Maxim among sound Divines, That being justified we work, but we don't work that we may be justified. So then, let us never put our Duties in the Room of Christ; the Man that rests in any Thing on this Side of Christ, will at last rest on this Side of Heaven: All our Duties and Works of Obedience will be but as Ropes of Sand, or Chains of Glass, too brittle to draw our Souls up to Glory.

It is very observable, That the Order and Connexion betwixt Duty and Privilege, is quite inverted in the Covenant of Grace, from what it was under Adam's Covenant: In the Last of These, Duty was the Foundation of Privilege; but in the First, viz. the New Covenant, Privilege received by Faith is the Foundation of Duty. In Adam's Covenant, Man was first to do his Duty; and on that Ground, in a Way of pactional Debr, he might expect and plead the Reward of Life: But now, Man having forfeited Life by the Breach of that Covenant, God will have him to take Life as a free Gift thro' Christ, and, thus, to set to his Seal to his Record that He hath given unto us eternal Life in his Son Jesus Christ; and thereupon, as a Fruit and Evidence of Life received, he will have us perform the Duties of his Law.

It is pleasant to observe, that when God published the Law at Mount Sinai, he ushered it in, with the great New-Covenant Grant, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage. Here is the Object and Foundation of their Faith; and thereupon he founds their Obedience unto the Precepts of the Moral Law, Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me, Thou shalt worship no graven Image, Thou shalt not prophane My Name or Sabbath, &c. If the Commandments of the Mo-
ral

nal Law had been set first, and thereupon God had said, Do these Things, and I will be your God; this had been a pure Covenant of Works indeed; but first He reveals Himself as their God in Christ, a reconciled God and Redeemer; and, upon this Footing, presses Obedience to his Commandments. So that, I say, the Order of Doctrine, laid in the Dispensation of the Gospel, is first to lead the Sinner by Faith unto Christ, and to God in Him; and thereupon to inculcate Obedience to the Law, as a Rule of Duty. This Order of Doctrine I find nicely observed by the Westminster Assembly, in compiling our excellent Confession of Faith and Catechisms, where they tell us first what we are to believe, and then the Duties which God requires of Man. The same Method we find the Apostle Paul observes, in most of his Epistles; so that this is no new Scheme, but the good old Way. And if this Order of Doctrine be inverted, we disturb the comely Order which infinite Wisdom has laid in the Dispensation of the new Covenant, and infallibly return back to an old Covenant of Works.

This is the Order I have aimed at in the following Discourse; whether I have hit it right, or not, I leave it to Others to judge. I do freely own, that, ever since I knew any Thing of Christianity, I never found greater Difficulty in any Thing, than to bring my Heart to fall

fall in with this Order of the New Covenant :
 And even after the Soul, as to the Main, is
 brought to acquiesce in this new Method of Sal-
 vation, yet there is so much of the old Adam;
 I mean of a legal Spirit, in us, as is still leading
 us insensibly back to Adam's Covenant, viz. to
 expect Mercy, Grace and Glory, on the Score
 of something wrought in us, or done by us.
 And our Words, who are Ministers, do many
 Times betray the Legality of our Hearts; which I
 speak in a Way of Regret from my own sad Expe-
 rience, not in a Way of Reflection upon Others:
 And I make no Doubt, but such as have a true
 Taste of the Gospel, may find something of this
 in the following Discourse, tho' I have endea-
 voured to shun it as much as I could.

If, by the Publication of these imperfect
 Scrapes, any shall be provoked to handle This,
 or any of the other Subjects, with more Accura-
 cy, which may be easily done, I shall heartily re-
 joice: And if either the Church of God, or
 any particular Soul, shall be edified by reading
 this, or any other of the quarrel'd Sermons, he
 owes no Thanks to me, but only to that God,
 who, by his overruling Providence, makes the
 Wrath of Man to praise him; and, for my
 own Part, I desire to believe, that the Remain-
 der of his Wrath he will restrain.

E. E.

Portmoak, June 6:
 1726.



Robert Ferris



SERMON

Preached at *Kirkaldie*, April 12th
1724.

On *Titus* iii. 8.

*This is faithful Saying, and these Things
I will that thou affirm constantly, that
they which have believed in God, might
be careful to maintain good Works :
These Things are good and profitable
unto Men.*

THE Apostle having in the preceeding
Part of this Chapter, particularly
from the 4th Verse and downwards,
given a brief Summary or Epitome
of the Doctrine of the Gospel, and of
the free Grace of God towards Sinners, through
the imputed Righteousness of our Lord Jesus
Christ ; he proceeds, in this 8th Verse, to shut
up the whole, with a serious Advice unto *Titus*,
what

what Use to make of the Doctrine of Grace, among his Hearers ; namely, upon that Footing, to urge them to the Study of practical Goliness as great Gain. *This is a faithful Saying, and these Things I will.*

Where these Things are considerable, *First*, We have the Apostle's Epilogue or Conclusion, with which he shuts up that grave and weighty Subject, which he had been treating in the preceeding Verses (*This is a faithful Saying*) Some indeed do understand this as a Preface unto what follows ; but I find the Generality of Interpreters do rather connect the Asseveration with what went before ; and particularly with what the Apostle had asserted in the Verse immediately preceeding, to wit, *That being justified by his Grace, we are made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life* ; and then immediately adds, *This is a faithful Saying.* The Apostle foresaw by the Spirit of Prophecy, that the Doctrine of Grace would meet with strange Opposition in After-ages of the World ; and that Opposition was already begun in his own Day, as appears from his Epistle to the *Galatians* ; and therefore ratifies it with the greater Solemnity ; *This is a faithful Saying.* From whence I observe by the by, That as Ministers of Christ are to declare the whole Counsel of God, so there are some Truths that need to be more vouched and dwelt upon than others ; particularly Truths that are more fundamental, and most controverted by Gain-sayers : Hence we find, there is sometimes an Oyes or a Watch-word added to some Truths, requiring our more diligent Attention and serious Intertainment. Thus the Apostle here, considering the Opposition the Doctrine of Grace would meet with from Men



of legal Spirits, he adds this Word of Attention to the Close of it, *This is a faithful Saying.* Ministers are Watchmen, and let for the Defence of the Truth; and therefore, when any Truth of God is in Danger, they are to double their Guard, and to support these Truths that are most attacked by the Enemy, that so they may not fall in the Streets. And if it be the Duty of Ministers to teach, inculcate, and support those Truths that are controverted or contradicted; surely it is also the Duty of People to study these Truths and the Arguments that support them, that so they may be in a Capacity to distinguish between Truth and Error, and to give a Reason of the Faith and Hope that it is in them. The Bereans have a high Commendation given them, they are called Men of noble and excellent Spirits, on this Account, that they would not swallow down by an implicate Faith the Doctrines taught even by the Apostles themselves; no, but they tried even the Apostolick Doctrine, by the Standard of the *Law* and *Testimony*. And this is a Thing not only commanded and commended in the Scriptures of Truth, but most agreeable likewise to the Dictates of right Reason, How is it possible that People can obey the Command of *Contenting* for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, if they do not understand the Doctrine of Faith, particularly these Doctrines that are in Danger of being wrested from them? Ministers are called Stewards in the House of God, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God: Now you know it is very much the Interest of the House or Family, to see that their Steward feed them with sound and wholesome Food, otherwise they may come to swallow a Stone in stead of a Bird, or a Scorpion in stead of a Fish. We call you

you, Sirs, to examine and try our Doctrines at the Bar of the Word ; and if they will not abide the Trial there, let them sink and perish for ever. There is always Ground to suspect any Set of Men, who decline or shun any fair Trial of their Doctrines ; *For he that doth Truth cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.* But Secondly, In the Words we have an Apostolick Command given unto Titus, and in him to all Ministers of the Gospel, *These Things I will that thou affirm constantly.* The Word in the Original, rendred *Affirm*, is borrowed from the Practice of these who, when they buy or sell a Thing, do oblige themselves to maintain the Claim and Title against all Law-suits or Intanglements : Titus and other Ministers are not only to teach the Doctrines of the Gospel, but to confirm and make them good against all the Cavils or Questions that may be moved about them. Thirdly, In the Words we have a particular Doctrine, which the Apostle recommends to be taught by Titus ; namely, *That they who have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good Works.* Where notice the Foundation of all good Works, and that is, *Believing in God*, to wit, in God as he is manifested in Christ, God reconciling the World to himself ; for out of Christ he cannot be the Object of Faith, but of Terror to a guilty Sinner. Now this believing in God is the very Foundation of all good Works ; *For without Faith 'tis impossible to please God* ; and they that have believed, are enjoined to *maintain good Works* : The Word in the Original is borrowed from the Military, particularly such as set themselves on the Front of the Battle, and march forward to encourage the whole Army to follow them.

them. Believers, would the Apostle say, must not only do good Works, but must be Patterns and Ensamples thereof to others, according to that of Christ, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that others seeing your good Works, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* But the Import of this you may meet with more fully afterwards. *Fourthly*, We have a very cogent and weighty Reason why Believers are to maintain good Works; Why, says he, *these Things are good and profitable unto Men.* The Apostle in the 5th Verse had secluded good Works from any Causality or Influence on our Justification or eternal Salvation; *Not by Works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us.* Now, lest any should alledge that in that Case good Works were altogether useless, he adds this as a Caveat, and says, *Do not mistake it, for although your good Works be not profitable for Justification, yet they are good and profitable unto Men on many other Accounts, of which we may hear likewise afterward.*

The Doctrine I notice from the Words is this, *That as Faith or Believing is the Source of good Works, so these good Works, which are the Fruits of Believing, are good and profitable unto Men:* Or take it thus, *That they, who have truly believed, are to be careful to maintain good Works, these being good and profitable unto Men.* The Foundation of this Doctrine from the Words is obvious. In speaking to it, I shall, through Divine Assistance, observe the Method following; *First*, I would speak a little of these good Works, which they who have believed in God are called to maintain. *Secondly*, Of that Believing in God, which is the Source and Fountain of good Works. *Thirdly*, Shew, that these good Works, flow-
ing

ing from Faith, are *good and profitable unto Men*.
Fourthly, Apply the whole.

First, I say, I would speak a little of good Works, where I would shew, 1st, What Works they are that may be called *good Works*. 2^{dly}, what is imported in *maintaining of good Works*. (1.) What Sort of Works they are that may be called *good Works*. In general then, you would know, that, considering the Law as a Covenant, or an abstracted Rule of Righteousness, as contradistinct from the Gospel, there are no Works done by Men that can be called *good Works*; for there is *none that doth Good, in this Respect, no, not one: In many Things we offend all*. The most blameless and perfect Actions of the most consummate Believer that ever drew Breath in God's Air, while in this State of Sin and Imperfection, cannot perform a Work legally good, because of the Mixture of Sin that attends his best Performances. And hence it is, that we find the Saints in Scripture owning, that they could not stand, if God should mark Iniquity; That all their Righteousness is as filthy Rags; That their Goodness extendeth not unto him. O Sirs, if God should lay Judgment to the Line, and Righteousness to the Plummets, we, and all our good Works, would be for ever rejected, like Reprobate Silver. And therefore, we have little Reason to think or imagine, that God is a Debtor to us for any Thing we do, or that our good Works do procure the Favour of God, his Acceptation, or a Title unto Life. But our Works are called *good Works*, as having a Respect unto the Law, considered as a Rule or Duty, in the sweet Hand of a Mediator: He makes his Yoke easy, and his Burden light to his People, by accepting of their weak Mints and
 En.

Endeavours, through his perfect Obedience and Satisfaction, as good, though attended with manifold Imperfections. Now, to constitute an Action good, in an Evangelical Sense, there are several Things requisite. 1st. To make a Work a good Work, it must be done by a good and holy Person, renewed by the Spirit of Christ, and justified by his Merit. 'Tis beyond all Dispute and Controversy, that the Person must first be accepted of God, and reconciled to him in Christ, before the Work can be accepted. *Abel's Person was accepted of God, and then his Offering : And hence it is, that the Sacrifices of the Wicked are said to be an Abomination to the Lord. The very Plowing of the Wicked is Sin ; the Matter is this, God is angry with their Persons, and he hates and lothes them while out of Christ : And therefore, nothing that comes from them, or that is done by them, can be acceptable : And therefore I say, To make Works good and acceptable unto God, they must be done by a Person that is in a gracious and reconciled State.* 2^{dly}, To make a Work a good Work, it must be a Thing required and called for by the Law of God. The Reason of this is plain, because it is God's Will that makes any Thing Sin or Duty ; and if it be not agreeable to his revealed Will, he may say unto us, *Who hath required this at your Hands?* Hence Christ taxeth the Pharisees, saying, *In Vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* And therefore, if you would do any Work acceptable to God, you must take Care, that the Thing you do be required and commanded of God. Indeed there are some Actions that are of an indifferent Nature ; that is, God has left Men at a perfect

Liberty, whether to do them or not: But then it would be remembred, that these Actions, in the Case of Offence or Edification, they cease to be indifferent, and fall under some Commandment of the Moral Law. In which Case, *Paul* says, *2 Cor. i. 13. If eating of Flesh will offend my Brother, I will eat no Flesh while the World standeth.* It was a Thing indifferent, whether *Paul* did eat Flesh or not; but when Offence was like to follow his Eating, he would abstain from it as much as though it were expressly forbidden in the Law of God, because in that Case it became a Breach of the Law of Love and Charity. 3dly, To make a Work a good Work, it must be done out of a right Principle. It must be done out of a Principle of Faith, as was already hinted, for no Work can be acceptable without this, *Heb. xi. 6.* And there is a twofold Faith requisite in a good Action. (1.) A general Faith or Perswasion, the Thing we do, may be done lawfully; and of this the Apostle speaks, when he says, *Whatever is not of Faith, is Sin. Rom. xiv. 23.* And, 2dly, A particular justifying Faith, believing the Acceptance of what we do, only through the Lord Jesus Christ, and his Merit and Mediation. Again, a good Work must be done, out of a Regard unto the Authority of God commanding; and that not simply, with a Respect unto the Authority of a God Creator; for thus a Heathen, or a Mahometan, may obey God, and do good Actions: But out of a Respect unto the Authority of a God in Christ. We must eye the Authority of the Creator in our Obedience, as coming in this blest Channel, otherwise it is not a true Christian Obedience: For we Christians are under the Law to Christ;

Christ; and when we are so, we are not without Law to God, seeing God hath commanded us to hear his Voice, and to obey him, as our Lord, King, and Lawgiver. And whatever we do, in Word or in Deed, we are to do all in the Name and Authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Glory of God by him. And further, good Works must be done with Simplicity, and godly Sincerity; avoiding hypocritical and pharisaical Ostentation in the Discharge of Duty. For his Soul that is lifted up, is not upright in him, *Heb. ii. 4.* 4thly, To make a Work a good Work, it must be done to a right End: It must be done to the Glory and Honour of God; this being the principal and ultimate End of our Being, according to that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. x. 31.* Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God. It must be done as a Declaration of our Gratitude to God for redeeming Love. We are bought with a Price, therefore we are to glorifie him in our Souls and Bodies which are his. They must be done also with a View to the Edification of others, *Matth. v. 16.* But these, and many other things to this Purpose, will fall in to be spoken to more particularly, when we come to the fourth general Head proposed in the Prosecution of the Doctrine.

Secondly, I come to enquire what may the be Import of that Phrase of being careful to maintain good Works? To this I answer briefly in the following Particulars. 1st, It implies, a diligent Attendance unto the Rule of the Word; according to that of David, *Psal. cxix. 9* Wherewith shall a young Man cleanse his Way? by taking Heed thereto according to thy Word. The Man he makes God's Statutes the Men of his Counsel: And when

he is called to this or that Piece of Service, he takes Advice of his Counsellors, whether he may do or forbear. *They are a Light unto his feet, and a Lamp unto his Paths* : As *Israel* looked to the Pillar of Cloud, and of Fire, in all their Motions and Travels, for Direction through the Wilderness ; so the gracious Soul he looks to the Law or Testimony in every Step of his Way towards the *Canaan* that is above. 2dly, It implies an Anxiety or Solicitude of Soul, to have his Actions managed and ordered according to that Rule. It's the very Desire of his Soul, to be found in the Lord's Way ; as it was with *David*, *Psal. cxix. 5. O that my Ways were directed to keep thy Statutes* ! He desires not only to have his outward Walk, but the inward Frame of his very Soul, all the Thoughts of it, moulded in an Agreeableness unto the Law of God, *Psal. cxix. 80. Let my Heart be sound in thy Statutes, that I be not ashamed*. Such is his Concern for this, that he lays up the Law of God in the very Cabinet of his Heart, as an Antidote against Sin, *Psal. cxix. 11. Thy Word have I hid in mine Heart, that I might no sin against thee*. 3dly, It implies a holy Watchfulness against all the Temptations, Motions or Occasions of Sin, either in Thought, Word or Action ; *I said I will take heed to my Ways*, says *David*. The Man sets a Watch over his Heart ; according to that Command, *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life*. He sets a Watch over his Eyes, and makes a Covenant with them, and over his Lips, lest Sin should either enter or go forth by that Door. 4thly, It implies an Embracing of every Opportunity for doing of good Works that God puts into his Hands, and improving the same.

When

When God puts the Opportunity or Talent in his Hand, he studies to lay it out for the Master's Use, and his own and others Profit and Advantage; according to that of Solomon, *Whatever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might*, 5thly, It implies a going on, or a Progress in the Duties of Obedience, without returning back again to the old Trade of Sin. The Christian, he is not like the Dog returning to his Vomit, or the Sow that was washen to wallow in the Mire; no, but the Righteous he holdeth on his Way; he maintains good Works; he waxes stronger and stronger; he forgets Things that are behind, and reacheth forth to Things that are before. 6thly, The Word here, as I hinted in the Explication, implies an exciting or influencing of others to the Study of good Works. The Word, as I said, is borrowed from Captains or Commanders, who go in the Front of the Battle, encouraging the Souldiers of the Army to follow their Example. The Believer he studies to cast a good Copy, and to recommend Holiness and good Works unto others, by his Practice; so as others, seeing his good Works, may be encouraged to do the like. Lastly, This maintaining of good Works must needs takes in a doing of all by Faith, and improving the Strength of Christ; *I will go in the Strength of the Lord, making mention of thy Righteousness, even of thine only*. But this leads me to the second general Head.

The second general thing propos'd in the Method, was, to give some Account of this Believing in God, which is given as the Character of those who maintain good Works. Here I would do three Things. 1. Shew what Believing in God implies. 2. Give some of the Qualities of this

Believing, 3. Shew the Influence that it hath upon good Works.

*First, What believing in God imports. 1st, It imports the Knowledge of God, in a suitable-ness to the Revelation which he hath made of himself to us, through Christ, in the Gospel. I do own, that the very Heathens may know his eternal Power, by the Things that are seen; but there is no saving Knowledge of God by a guilty Sinner, but as he is in Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. God, who commanded Light to shine out of Darkeness, hath shined into our Hearts, to give us the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. And whatever fine Notions or Speculations People may have of God, and of his Excellencies, as discovered in the Works of Creation and Providence; yet if their Notions of him be not regulate by the Gospel-revelation, and if this Revelation of a God in Christ be not opened by the Spirit of Wisdom, rending the vail of Ignorance and Unbelief, that is upon the Mind by Nature, there can be no saving, satisfying, or sanctifying Knowledge of God, and consequently no true Faith or Believing. Indeed a rational Knowledge may produce a rational Faith, and an historical Knowledge may produce an historical Faith; but it's only a saving Illumination of the Mind with the Knowledge of a God in Christ reconciling the World to himself, that can produce a saving Faith. And this Knowledge is so essential to Faith, or Believing, that we find it frequently in Scripture called by the Name of Knowledge; *I will give them an Heart to know me, that I am the Lord. By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many. This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and**

Jesus

Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. 2dly, To believe in God, it implies a firm and steady Assent unto the Truth and Veracity of God speaking in his Word. It's to believe and credit what he says, on his own Testimony: This is called a *receiving the Record of God*, a *setting to the Seal that God is true*, a *believing of the Report of the Gospel*. When the Man hears the Word of the Truth of the Gospel, he is ready to cry out, with the Apostle, It's a faithful Saying. This Word is established in the Heavens; yea, Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but this Word of God endureth for ever. 3dly, To believe in God, is to trust that this Word of a reconciled God in Christ is not only true in the general, but that it shall be true to me in particular; that it shall be made good to me: He takes up God in Christ, as a promising God, promising Peace and Pardon, Grace and Glory, in Christ; and he takes up the Promise as coming to him in the Offer of the Gospel, as the immediate Ground and Foundation of his Faith, *Acts ii. 39.* *The Promise is to you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Now, I say, the Man taking up the Word of Grace and Promise in this Way he trusts the Promiser for the performing thereof to his own Soul: He takes it as sufficient Security for all promised Good, saying, Here is my Substance; This is all my Salvation. Hence Faith acted upon the Promise of God, is called *the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not Seen, Heb. xi. 1.* And this is what many notable Divines, both abroad and at home, call the Assurance of Faith, or the appropriating Persuasion of Faith; because there's not only a Persuasion of

the Truth of the Promise, but a Perswasion of it, with Application and Appropriation of it to the Man himself in particular. And this is all I say at present about the Ingredients of Faith in God. I come,

Secondly, To give some of the Properties and Qualities thereof; and there are these few following that I mention, *First*, It's a staying, quieting or composing Grace: It will settle the Mind under the greatest Storms and Disorders, *Isa. xxvi. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed on thee.* Hence the Believer, under Clouds of Desertion, Temptation, and Affliction, is directed to *trust in the Name of the Lord, and to stay himself upon his God, Isa. li. 10.* 2dly, It's a receptive or a taking Grace. It gives nothing to God as other Graces do, but only takes or receives from the Lord; it does not come to give, but to get. Hence it's express'd by a taking, *Rev. xxii 17. A taking of the Water of Life freely*; or, which is the same thing, a receiving, *John i. 12. To as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* Faith is in Scripture sometimes compar'd to the Eye; *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth, Isa. xlv. 22.* You know, the Eye, when it beholds external Objects, it does not give any Thing to what it beholds, but only takes in the Image or Impression of what it sees, and conveys that to the Mind; so Faith, it does not add or give any Thing to God; only it beholds him, and the Discoveries he has made of his Grace, and Glory, and Love, and Faithfulness in Christ, and impresseth the Soul therewith. Hence we, by beholding his Glory, as in a Glass, are said to be chan-

changed into the same Image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. 3dly, Although it be only a receptive Grace with Respect to it's Object, yet it is a mighty operative Grace with Respect unto it's Subject where it is implanted: For, as you may hear afterward, it influences every good Word and Work; and therefore all true Obedience is called the *Obedience of Faith*. So that an idle or unactive Faith is but dead, like the Body without the Soul. 4thly, It's a radicant or rooting Grace; It roots the Soul as it were in the Root of *Jesse*, the Plant of Renown: And it self is the Root of the other Graces of the Spirit, whereby they are made to grow and blossom. As the Tree strikes its Roots into the Ground, and from thence draws Fatness, Sap and Moisture, conveying a digested Nourishment unto the several Branches, whereby they are made to bud and flourish, and bring forth Fruit: So Faith, it grafts and unites the Soul to Christ, deriving spiritual Sap, and Moisture and Fatness, whereby every other Habit of Grace is drawn forth to a lively Exercise. 5thly, It is a most humble and lowly Grace. It carries the Man quite out of himself into Christ for all; hence it's called a *submitting to the Righteousness of God*, Rom. x. 3. A very strange Expression. Shall it be reckoned Submission for a condemned Criminal to receive a Pardon? Is it Submission for a naked Beggar to receive a Robe? Yet thus it is; the Pride of our Hearts will not stoop so low, as to be obliged to the Son of God, for Righteousness, Pardon and Life: And this is the very Thing that makes Faith or Believing so difficult. What Difficulty is there for a naked Man to receive a Garment to cover him? What Difficulty for a poor Man to receive

ceive a Gift? What Difficulty for a weary Man to sit down and rest him? But the Thing that makes this difficult is the Pride of our Hearts, together with our Ignorance both of our Malady and Remedy. Now, I say, Faith it breaks the Pride of the Heart; and submits, or lies down, as it were, at the Foot of sovereign Grace, heartily content to be indebted to Christ for all. The Man is content to be a Fool, that Christ may be his Wisdom; content to be a Criminal, in the Eyes of Law, and Justice, and Conscience, that Christ may be his Righteousness; content to own himself a polluted filthy Sinner, that in him he may be sanctified; content to own himself a Slave, that he may be a free Man in Christ, and share of his Redemption. This is true Gospel Humility indeed, and what the high and lofty One regards, *Isa. lvii. 15. Thus saith the high and lofty One, &c. Though God be high, yet hath he regard unto such as are thus lowly.* Sixthly, It's an elevating and ennobling Grace: Tho' it be a humbling Grace, yet it is a most exalting Grace; it elevates the Soul above this lower World, it looks down on it as a Dung-hill, and mounts up with Wings toward the Land that is very far off; it enters within the Vail, and takes a View of Things invisible; and particularly of an unseen Christ, and triumphs in him: *Whom, having not seen, we love; whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.* It mounts so high, that it will even dare to sit down upon the Throne with Christ in Glory: Hence we are said to sit together with him by Faith in heavenly Places. Seventhly, It's a cheering and a comfortable Grace: We are filled with Joy and Peace in believing: *I had fainted (says David)*
unless

unless I had believed. Eighthly, It's a bold and confident Grace ; hence we read frequently of the *Boldness of Faith*, and the *Assurance of Faith*, *Heb. x. 22. Heb. iv. 16.* It is disputed at this Day, whether Assurance be of the Essence of Faith : I incline not to call it by the Name of Assurance, because some boggle at that Word, but I choose rather to call it by the Name of the Certainty of Faith. I do not design to enter much upon that Controversy, at present ; all I say of it is only this, That there cannot miss to be a Certainty in Faith, because Doubts and Fears do vanish before it. *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith ?* How Faith can fill the Soul with *Joy and Peace*, yea, with *Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*, if it have no Certainty in it, as to these Things in which it doth rejoice, is what I think no Man is able to account for. How a Man can rest on Christ, and apply him and his Salvation to himself in particular, and yet not believe that he *shall be saved through the Grace of Christ*, to me appears a Paradox. I do not say that Faith excludes Doubts out of the Believer, but I say that Faith excludes Doubting out of its own Nature. Light excludes Darkness out of its Nature, and yet there may be much Darkness in a Room where there is some Light : Certainty may be of the Nature of Faith, although there be much Darkness and Doubting in the Believer ; through the Prevalency of Ignorance and Unbelief that remains in him, and will remain, while he is clogged with a Body of Death. So, in like Manner, Love it excludes Enmity out of the Nature of it ; and yet, in the Believer, who loves his Christ, there is much remaining Enmity, whereby his Love is exceedingly weakened : So the Certainty

ty of Faith is weakned through the remaining Unbelief that is still in the Believer's Heart. But now here it would be remembred, that although there be a Certainty in the Nature of Faith, a Certainty of Trust, Rest, or Confidence in God, grounded on his Promise in Christ, yet there is a great Difference betwixt this Certainty of Faith, and the Certainty or Assurance of Sense or Reflection, which some call a discursive Assurance. For, the Certainty of Sense is built upon the Soul's own Experience or Feeling; but the Certainty of Faith is built on the Promise, and Christ in the Promise. The first Sort of Assurance is not at all in the Nature of Faith, but the last Sort of Assurance or Certainty, is what is and has been owned by all the Stream of reform'd Divines, both at Home and Abroad, ever since our happy Reformation from Popery. I shall only add here, that the Difference betwixt the Certainty of Faith, and of Sense, is very evident and obvious: For the one has a Respect to what the Soul feels and sees present before it; but the other, to wit the Certainty of Faith, has a Respect to Things promised, which are not seen or felt otherwise but as they ly in the Womb of the Promise, and in the Veracity of the Promiser. To give you a few Instances: By the Certainty of Faith, *Moses* and the believing *Israelites* knew, before they came out of *Egypt*, that that they would have a Passage through the Red-sea, as through Dry-land; but by the Certainty of Sense, they knew it, when they saw the Waters file off on every Hand, making a Lane for *Israel* to pass on: By Faith, acted on God's Promise, they knew that the Walls of *Jericho* would fall down at the Sounding of Rams Horns; but by the Certainty

tainty of Sense, they knew it, when they saw
 them actually fall flat before them : By the Assu-
 rance of Faith, *Abraham* believed, without stag-
 gering, that he should have a Son, because God
 had promised it ; but by the Assurance of Sense, he
 knew it, when he got *Isaac* in his Arms : By the
 Assurance of Faith, *Abraham* and the Old Testa-
 ment Worthies believed that the *Messiah* was to
 come in the Fulness of Time ; but by the Assurance
 of Sense, *John* the Baptist and others knew it, when
 they saw him manifested in the Flesh, and beheld
 his Glory, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God, which*
taketh away the Sins of the World : By the Certainty
 of Faith, we under the New Testament are perswa-
 ded and assur'd, that Christ is to come again the
 second Time ; but by the Certainty of Sense, we
 shall know it, when we shall see him descend
 from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the
 Archangel and Trump of God. By Faith we
 are assured of the Resurrection of the Dead, and
 of our own Resurrection in particular ; but by
 Sense, we shall be assured of it at that Day, when
 the Voice shall be heard, commanding the *Sea* to
 give up its Dead, and the *Earth* to give up its Dead.
 Thus, I say, there is a great and visible Difference
 between the Certainty of Faith and the Certainty
 of Sense : By Faith, acted upon the Promise, I
 believe the Remission of Sins, and of my Sins,
 through Christ ; but by the Certainty of Sense, I
 am assured of this, when God by his Spirit seals
 his Pardon on my Soul, with a sensible Smile of
 his Countenance : By Faith, I believe God to be
 my God, because he has said it in the Covenant,
I will be their God ; but by the Certainty of Sense,
 I believe this, when he reveals and manifests him-

self to my Soul: By Faith, grounded on the
 Promise of eternal Life in Christ, I believe mine
 own Salvation in particular; but by the Certain-
 ty of Sense, I believe, because I have I have belie-
 ved; or because God has discovered himself to
 be a saving God to me, by the Operation of his
 Spirit upon my Soul. So, I say, Faith is a bold
 and confident Grace: It intermedles with, ap-
 plies, and appropriates and makes use of the Goods
 of the Testament of Christ as its own, the Testament
 being confirmed in the Blood of the Lamb; and this
 Testament it not only pleads, but rejoiceth in. The
 Language of Faith is not properly, May be, or
 peradventure it shall be so, tho I grant that a
 weak Faith may many Times lurk under a *May-
 be*; but, I say, let Faith be stript of its Incumbran-
 ces, or of these Things that are opposite to its
 Nature, let it but get a full View of the Promise,
 and Faithfulness of the Promiser, it will set its
 Foot on the Belly of Unbelief, and all Discou-
 ragements, saying, It shall be, because God hath
 said it. Thus, you see, Faith expresseth it self,
*Mic. vii. 8, 9, 10. I will look unto the Lord, I will
 wait for the God of my Salvation, my God will hear
 me: And Verse 8. When I fall, I shall arise; when
 I sit in Darkness the Lord shall be a Light unto
 me: And Verse 9. at the Close, He will bring me
 forth to the Light, and I shall behold his Right-
 eousness. 9thly, It's a very quick-sighted Grace:
 It can see Relief coming to the Soul at a vast Di-
 stance, saying, I shall see the Goodness of the Lord
 in the Land of the Living. It can look through
 frowning Dispensations, and see Love in the
 Heart of God. 10thly, It's a strengthening and e-
 stablishing Grace; Except ye believe, ye shall not be estab-
 lished.*

blissed. It's by Faith that we are strengthened in the Grace that's in Jesus Christ. Faith in a Manner weilds the very Arm of Omnipotency, and cries with Paul, *I can do all Things through Christ strengthening me.* To conclude, Faith is a patient Grace, it waits on the Lord till his Time come for the Accomplishment of his Promise. Unbelief is hasty, I said in mine Haste, All Men are Liars : But he that believeth shall not make Haste : It's Language is, *I will look to the Lord, I will wait on the God of my Salvation. The Vision is for an appointed Time ; though it tarry, wait for it, for at the End it will speak, and it will not tarry.*

I proceed now to enquire, *Thirdly,* What Influence this Faith hath upon good Works ? *Answer,* There are several Things that are inlaid with the very Nature and Exercise of Faith, which cannot miss to influence Holiness and good Works ; as, 1. True Faith it unites the Soul to Christ, who is the very Root and Fountain of all Holiness. *Of me, saith the Lord, is thy Fruit found. Except ye abide in me, and I in you, to wit by Faith, ye cannot bring forth much Fruit.* Indeed a Person in a State of Nature may bring forth many Fruits that are morally and materially good, but without Union with Christ we can do no Work that is spiritually good and acceptable : *For as the Branch cannot bring forth Fruit, except it abide in the Vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* We may as well gather *Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles,* as expect Works that are spiritually good from a Person out of Christ ; Why ? The Reason of it is plain, his Root is but *Rottenness,* while he grows upon the old *Adam* ; and therefore his *Blossom shall go up as the Dust.* While a Man is growing upon

pon the old *Adam*, he is married to the Law as a Covenant, and therefore all his Works they are but dead Works ; and can ever dead Works be acceptable to the Living God ? We must be dead to the Law by the Body of Christ, and married unto that better Husband, before we can bring forth Fruits unto God, *Rom. vii. 4.* 2dly, Faith works by Love, and Love is the fulfilling of the Law. Love to God in Christ is the next and immediate Fruit of true and saving Faith: Now the Heart being oil'd with the Love of God in Christ, this makes the Man to abound in good Works, *the Love of Christ constraineth me*, says the Apostle. Love makes a Man to keep God's Commandments ; Love will make a Man to run through Fire and Water for him. *Many Waters cannot quench Love, &c.* Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ ? *1 Cor. xiii.* 3dly, Faith is a Shield to quench the fiery Darts of Satan. When Temptation without, and Corruption within, are forming a Conspiracy against the Work of Grace in the Soul, whereby the whole Work is endangered ; then Faith breaks the Plot, and countermines it. When *Adonijah's* Conspiracy had carried the whole Strength of the Kingdom of *Israel*, it was broken by making Application unto *David*, *Hast thou not said that Solomon shall reign ?* So, when Temptation and Corruption have carried the Matter to a great Height, the Conspiracy is broken by Faith's Application to Christ, O Lord, hast thou not said that Grace shall reign, and that Sin shall not have Dominion over me ? And thus the Soul is made to go on its Way, rejoicing to work Righteousness. 4thly, Faith applies the Promises of the new Covenant, and fetches Grace from thence, for obeying the

Precept of the Law ; so that Faith, as it were, travels between the Precept & the Promise: It carries the Man from the Precept unto the Promise, and from the Promise to the Precept. As for Instance, when the Law says, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind* ; Faith runs to the Promise, where God hath said, *I will circumcise their Hearts to love me*. When the Law says, *Thou shalt fear the Lord, and make him thy Dread* ; Faith, in that Case, runs to the Promise for the Grace of Fear ; *I will put my Fear in their Hearts, and they shall not depart from me*. Does the Law say, *Thou shalt know the Lord, and acknowledge him for thy God* ? Well, Faith looks to the Promise, *I will give them an Heart to know me that I am the Lord*. Does the Law oblige us to keep all his Commandments ? Faith runs to the Promise, and applies it ; *I will put my Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in my Statutes*. 5thly, Faith hath Influence on good Works, as it beholds the Authority of a God in Christ interposed in every Commandment of the Law. The Eye of natural Reason may see, as was hinted, the Authority of a God Creator, as is plain in the Case of the Heathens ; but it's only the Eye of that Faith, which is of God's Operation, that can behold the Authority of a God in Christ, and receive the Law out of his Hands : In this Respect, we are told, that no Man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. And when the Law is received from his Mouth, it does not reflect Dishonour upon God as a Creator. O ! when a God in Christ is view'd by Faith, the Soul cannot but cry out, *He's my King of Old, working Salvation in the midst of the Earth ; His Commandments are not grievous ; His Yoke is easy, and his Burden light ; for*

I see it no more a Covenant of Works to me, but a Rule of Obedience, sweetned with redeeming Love and Grace. Thus you see what Influence Faith hath upon good Works.

The Fourth general Head, proposed in the Method, was, to enquire, In what Respect good Works are profitable unto Men?

But, *First*, I would shew you negatively; wherein they are not profitable unto Men. *1st*, Then they are not at all profitable unto Men, for Justification or Acceptance before God; for, *by the Works of the Law*, says the Apostle, *no Flesh living can be justified*: Our Justification and Acceptance, both as to our Persons and our Works, goes upon a quite other Ground, namely, upon the everlasting Righteousness, the Obedience and Death of the Son of God as our Surety, apprehended by Faith. 'Tis in him that all the Seed of *Israel* shall be justified, and shall glory: Indeed the Generality of Men, that are trained up in a *Protestant* Country, will tell you, That they do not expect to be justified by their own Righteousness, but only by the Righteousness of Christ: But alas, How few are they, that do really and actually submit unto this Righteousness? There is a cursed Bias in the Heart of Man, to lean to something in himself. Is not this the Language of thy Heart many Times, O if I had such a Frame! such a melting Heart! such Love! such a Degree of Humility and Obedience! then I think God would accept of me, and love me on that Account. But, Sirs, let me tell you, that it is not on the Account of any Thing wrought in you, or done by you, that God accepts of you, but only on the Account of the Doing and Dying of the Son of God: I may
say

say to all Legalists, that are looking for Acceptance with God, on the Ground of the Law, and their own Obedience, as the Prophet *Isaiah* says to a Set of Men in his Day, *Isa. lix. 6. Their Webs shall not become Garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their Works.* So then, good Works are not at all profitable to Righteousness and Justification. Hence is that, *Isa. lvii. 12. I will declare thy Righteousness, and thy Works, for they shall not profit thee.* 2dly, Good Works are not at all profitable to found a Claim or Title unto Heaven, or yet to any Blessing and Mercy promised in the whole Covenant of Grace; for Heaven, and all the Blessings that ly on this Side of it, they come to us in the Way of a free Gift. God gives Christ his unspeakable Gift, and with him he freely gives us these Things; The Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. I own indeed, that in God's Covenant of Promise there is a Connexion and Order established, for conferring of these promised Blessings unto us: So that when God gives one Thing, it's a Pledge of another Thing a-coming; when he gives Grace, to be sure he will give Glory; when he gives a mourning Heart, it's a Sign that Comfort is a-coming, because that is God's Method and Way, to give the *Oil of Joy for Mourning, and to revive the Heart of the Humble.* But though the Tears of Gospel-mourning be a Sign and Evidence of Comfort a-coming, yet they are not the Condition for which God bestows Comfort. So God has connected Faith and Salvation together in the Covenant; So that he that believeth shall be saved: But 'tis not our Faith that intitles us unto Salvation; no, but Faith unites the Soul to Christ, in whom we re-

cover our Right to the forfeited Inheritance. 'Tis by Virtue of the Soul's Union with Christ by Faith, that it is intitled to all the promised Blessings. Hence all the Promises are said to be *in him, Yea, and in him, Amen.* There is no Promise in the Bible, but it is made in the first Instant to Christ as the Head, and in him to the Members of his mystical Body: Just as it was in the first Covenant, to wit, the Covenant of Works; the Promise of Life, upon Condition of perfect Obedience, was made directly to *Adam*, as the Covenant-Head, and in him to his Posterity: So in the new Covenant, of which Christ is the Head, the Promise of Life, and every Thing belonging to it, is first made to him; and in him, to all his spiritual Seed and Offspring: And in this Respect, all the Promises are *Yea and Amen* in him. Christ is the first *Heir of all Things*, and the Title of the younger Brethren is only through him, or by Virtue of their Union with him. Thus good Works, I say, are not profitable unto Men, in order to found a Title to Heaven, and eternal Life. 3dly, Our good Works, as they are not profitable unto Men, in any of these Respects, so neither are they profitable unto God, as though he had any Advantage by them, *Job xxii. 2, 3. Can a Man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it Gain to him, that thou makest thy self perfect?* Hence David acknowledgeth, that his Goodness extended not unto the Lord. Alas! we are ready to think, that God is much indebted unto us, when we do this or that: Have we fasted and prayed, mourned and repented, kept the Sabbath, attended Ordinances, and performed this or the other Duty; and yet

yet, will not God be pleased with all? No, no, do not mistake it, Sirs, you that bring these Things as a Price in your Hands, to recommend you to God, all your Duties are but like the cutting off of a Dog's Neck, and the offering of Swines Blood upon his Altar; and therefore he will say to you, as he said to Israel, *Isa. i. 11. To what Purpose are the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me?*

But now, you may perhaps say to me, By this Way of speaking you make good Works profitable for nothing at all. What strange Doctrine is this? I answer, Altho' they be not at all profitable, in any of these Respects, but wholly unprofitable and pernicious, yet good Works when done out of a Principle of Faith, they are really profitable on many other Accounts; As 1st, They are profitable as they are the Fruits and Evidences of a true and lively Faith, *Ja. ii. 18, 22. Yea, a Man may say, Thou hast Faith, and I have Works: Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will shew thee my Faith by my Works. And Verse 22. See'st thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by Works was Faith made perfect?*

From whence it's plain, that Works are profitable, as the Fruits and Evidence of true Faith. We know that there is Sap and Life in the Tree, by the Fruits, the Leaves, and Blossoms that it puts forth; so we know our Faith to be a true Faith, by the Fruits of Holiness and good Works. Yea, our good Works will be brought forth at the last Day as the Evidence of our Faith; and therefore it's said, *Rev. xx. 12. They were judged according to their Works.* Works are not a Ground of Confidence, but an Evidence; they are not the Foundation of Faith, but the Fruits of it: And the Belie-

ver's Comforts may be increased by the Sight of
 good Works, though it is not built on them. In
 a Word, they manifest our Claim and Title to the
 Crown, but do not at all found or merit the same. *We*
have Peace with God, and with Conscience, by the
 Righteousness of Christ; and by Holiness, or good
 Works, our Peace of Conscience is maintained and
 evidenced unto us. 2dly, They are profitable, as
 they are Testimonies and Evidences of our Grati-
 tude unto God for the Wonders of his Grace and
 Love, manifested in and by Jesus Christ. Hence
 is that of David, *Psal. cxvi. 12. What shall I ren-*
der to the Lord for all his Benefits toward me? I will
take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of
the Lord. 1 Pet. ii. 9. *Ye are a chosen Generation, a*
royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People, that
ye should shew forth the Praises of him who hath cal-
led you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light.
 The Works of Obedience, they are as it were
 Thank-offerings unto God for the Benefits bestowed
 on us; and when Men have not a Conversation
 suitable unto their Mercies they despise the Good-
 ness of God. Hence is it that the Lord complains
 of such, saying, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye*
Foolish and Unwise? 3dly, They are profitable and
 needful for strengthening our Assurance, 1 John ii.
 3. *Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep*
his Commandments. And Verse 5. *Whoso keepeth*
his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected.
Hereby know we that we are in him, 2 Pet. i. 5. to
 Verse 10. From all which you see, that Assurance
 is strengthened and confirmed by the Fruits of Ho-
 liness and good Works. We read, *That the Spirit*
beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Chil-
dren of God: And it's well, when, with the Wit-
 ness

ness of the Spirit, we have that of Water, that is Sanctification and Purity of Heart and Life. 4thly, They are profitable, as they are edifying unto others, *Mat. v. 16.* Christ does not there encourage Vain-glory and Boasting, but proposeth the true End of our visible or external Holiness ; namely, that others may have Matter of Praise to God for his Grace abounding toward us ; and that they may be also engaged to the Study of Holiness and practical Religion by our Example. It was a Saying of *Hierom*, *That he loved Christ dwelling in Austin.* So we ought so to walk, as others may love Christ dwelling in us. It's an Exhortation to believing Wives, *1 Pet. iii. 1.* *So to walk, that their Husbands may be win to the Lord.* So that, I say, good Works are edifying to others. 5thly, They are profitable, as they serve to adorn the Profession of the Gospel, *1 Tim. 6. 1.* *Let as many Servants, as are under the Yoke, count their own Masters worthy of double Honour,* that the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blasphemed. *Tit. ii. 5, 9, 10, 11.* Thus they serve to adorn Religion. The Church is the Lord's Garden ; and you know the Fruitfulness of the Trees of the Garden serve exceedingly to adorn it ; whereas Barrenness, or bad Fruit, is a Disgrace, and makes the Garden to be ill spoken of. When Men, professing Godliness, have not a Walk and Conversation suitable, it makes Enemies and Strangers to conclude, that all Religion is but a Fraud or Cheat, and that there is no Reality in it ; whereas a fruitful Conversation stops the Mouths of the Enemies of Religion, *1 Pet. ii. 15.* *So is the Will of God, that with Well-doing ye may put to Silence the Ignorance of foolish Men.* 6thly, They are profitable, as they manifest our Implantation or In-grafting into Christ, *Eph. ii. 10.* *We are his Work-*
manship,

manship, created in Christ to good Works which God hath before ordained that ye should walk in them. 7thly, There is an Analogy and Proportion between good Works and Glory, Rom. vi. 22. But now being free from Sin, and become Servants to God, ye have your Fruit unto Holiness, and the End everlasting Life. But I do not insist.

I proceed now to the last Thing in the Method, which was the Application. *First*, This Doctrine may serve for Information in these two or three Particulars. 1st, See hence the right Way to attain true Morality, or how you may come to do good Works to purpose: You must believe in God, and by Faith be united to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle, Rom. vii, tried to do good Works by the Strength of Nature, but it would not do with him; for the Commandment, which was ordained to Life, he found to be unto Death: And I do verily believe, that none shall ever make a better Hand of it than he did, try it who will, by the Strength of Nature. The Law of it self only irritates Corruption, instead of mortifying it: For, says he, *When the Commandment came, Sin revived.* Like a Serpent that is chill'd with the Cold, it lies as if it were dead; but, when brought to the Heat, it revives and spits Venom: So corrupt Nature, when brought to the Commandment, or the Commandment brought to it, it revives and gathers Strength, and discovers more Malignity than it did before: *Sin, taking Occasion by the Commandment, works in us all Manner of Concupiscence.* 2dly, See hence, how unjustly Ministers, who endeavour to preach the Doctrine of the Grace of God, or who preach down Works in the Matter of Justification, are aspersed as Enemies to good Works and Holiness,

or as if they separated between Faith and good Works : This was a Calumny cast upon Christ himself, which made him offer that Vindication, *Matth. v. I am not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil the Law.* This was a Charge against the Proto-martyr Stephen, *Acts vi. 13.* That he spoke blasphemous Things against the holy Place, and the Law : And this also was a Charge against the Apostle Paul and his Doctrine; hence it is, that he anticipates that Objection, *Rom. iii. 31. Do we destroy the Law through Faith ? God forbid ; nay, we establish the Law.* 3dly, See hence the Folly of those, who, under a Pretext of Grace, or of Faith in Christ, give Way unto Licentiousness, as many carnal Gospellers do. Whatever Pretences such may have to Faith, yet they are Strangers unto it, and never felt the Effect of divine Grace on their own Souls ; otherwise it would teach them that, denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World. It's no new Thing for corrupt Nature to abuse the Doctrine of the Grace of God : This was an Evil the Apostle complains of in his Day ; hence he takes Notice of some who argued, that they might sin, that Grace might abound, *Rom. vi.* But though the Doctrine of Grace may be abused while it lies floating in the Head, yet when it gets into the Heart, it engages to Holiness in all Manner of Conversation. In a Word, though the Doctrine of Grace may be abused, the Habit and Exercise of Grace cannot be abused unto Sin.

Use Second, Is it so, that it's they, and they only who believe, that do and can maintain good Works ? Then my first Exhortation is, O believe

in the Son of God. We read of a Company, *Joh. vi. 29.* who came to Christ, asking him, *What shall we do that we may work the Works of God?* Christ's Answer is, *This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* This is the great and fundamental Preecept, that lays the Foundation of all true Obedience; For all true Obedience is the Obedience of Faith; And therefore study to obey that great Commandment, *Joh. iii. 23.* *And this is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.* But I do not enlarge upon this Use at present.

The second Exhortation is to them that have believed, that you may be careful to maintain good Works. Time will not allow me to enlarge upon this either: Only consider, by way of Motive shortly, That as every Person of the adorable Trinity bears a Share, according to their particular Oeconomy, in the Work of Man's Redemption; So there is an Obligation, arising from every One of them, tying us to the Study and Maintenance of good Works. The Father has elected you from Eternity, and loved you with an everlasting Love; and why did he elect you? It was unto Holiness or good Works. *Eph. i.* *He hath predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children, according to the good Pleasure of his Will, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love.* The Son has redeemed us with his Blood, not only that we should be liberate from Wrath, but that we should be holy, and abound in the Fruits thereof, *Titus ii. 14.* *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* The Holy Ghost is our Comforter, and he dwells in us as in a Temple;
And

And therefore we are bound and obliged not to grieve him; *Grieve not the holy Spirit, whereby you are sealed unto the Day of Redemption. Know ye not, that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy.* Thus, I say, every Person of the adorable Trinity, and their Relation to us, obligeth us to the Study of good Works. Again, the Covenant of Grace, and the Promises thereof, not only encourage, but oblige us to the Study of good Works. 1 Cor. vii. 1. *Having these Promises, dearly Beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of the Lord.*

But I must of Necessity pass other Motives, and conclude the whole with a few Directions or Advices. Take these following. 1st, If you would do good Works, take Care that your State be right: I mean, take Care that ye have a Station in Christ, the second *Adam*; for, without this, you cannot bring forth Fruit, either pleasing to God, or profitable to your own Souls. Thou art but a Thorn and Thistle in God's Vineyard, while thou art in a State of Nature: And therefore there's no good Fruit of Obedience that can grow upon thee. See that you have the Spirit of Christ within you, and, for this End, plead that Promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will put my Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in my Statutes.* It's the Spirit of the Head that animates all the Members of the Body: He helps our Infirmities in Prayer, and in other good Works also. 2^{dly}, In all your Works or Duties of Obedience, keep your Eye upon the chief Corner-stone that God hath laid in *Zion*. You know a Mason or Builder he can-

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not

not miss to make very irregular Work, if he do not keep his Eye upon the Foundation and Corner-stone of the House ; his Work will be marr'd : Just so is it here ; if we do not keep our Eye on Christ by Faith, as the Foundation laid in Zion, the Foundation of Acceptance, the Foundation of Assistance, we can never yield acceptable Obedience unto God. And when either the Merit or Spirit of Christ go out of Sight, immediately the Heart turns legal, whereby all our Duties are spilt and marr'd. 3dly, Study always to keep up the lively Impression of this awful Truth upon your Hearts, that God could find Matter of Condemnation against you, not only from your worst Sins, but from the best of your Duties. The most holy and heavenly Man that ever breathed, durst not adventure the Salvation of his Soul upon the most heavenly Thought that ever he conceived. Due Impressions of this will help to keep your Hearts right in Point of Righteousness ; so as not to build your Acceptation before God upon your good Works, but only on the Works of the Son of God. The Apostle, I find, has a notable Word to this Purpose, 1 Cor. iv. 4. *I know nothing of my self, yet am I not hereby justified.* The Apostle's Meaning is (*I know nothing of my self*) as if he had said, I am not conscious to my self of any Unfaithfulness in my Ministry, or Trust that God has repos'd in me ; my Conscience does not smite me for Neglect of Duty (yet am I not hereby justified) q. d. *The I have laboured more abundantly than all the rest, though I have fought the good Fight, finished my Course, kept the Faith, (yet am I not hereby justified)* all this will not make a Righteousness by which I may expect to be justified or

accepted of God. No, he accounted all as Dung and Loss, in the Point of Justification, that he might be found in Christ, not having his own Righteousness : So that you see, even in the Presence of your best Graces, Works and Duties of Obedience, free Grace, through imputed Righteousness, is to be your only Sanctuary and City of Refuge. 4thly, Whenever you are helped to do any Thing in Obedience to the Law, still remember what you do is done in a borrowed Strength, and that will keep you humble ; for it is a vain Spirit that is proud of what is borrowed. 2 Cor. iv. 7. *Who made thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou did receive it, why dost thou boast, as if thou received it not?* And therefore do not sacrifice to your own Net ; for it's not free Will, but free Grace, to which thou art beholden. * *It's God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* 5thly, Beware of legal Ends and Motives in the performing of good Works.

Question, What are these? I answer, First, It's a legal End in Obedience, when a Man obeys, or does good Works, to make an Attonement for his former Sin ; some Folk when they have fallen into any Sin of Omission or Commission, for which their Consciences do check and challenge them, they will purpose, vow and resolve, that they will do better in Time coming ; and thereby they think they will make God amends for what Injury they have done to him and his holy Law : This argues a legal Spirit. There's nothing that can atone for the Guilt of Sin, but the Ransom and Propitiation that God hath found. 2dly, When a Man yields Obedience, only to still the Clamors of an a-

wakened Conscience, or to keep his Conscience
 easie. Alas, Sirs, our own Righteousness and
 good Works they may well dirt and stop the
 Mouth of Conscience, but they will never *purge*
the Conscience from dead Works. Nothing less can
 satisfy Conscience, God's Deputy, than what satis-
 fies Divine Justice, and that is the Blood of Christ
 applied by Faith. And therefore it must needs ar-
 gue or discover a Man to be of a legal Spirit, that
 licks himself whole with his good Works. Good
 Works are not to be neglected, but they are not
 to be rested in, or upon, as a Righteousness. *3dly,*
When a Man yields Obedience to the Commands
of the Law, only that he may be kept out of Hell.
 It's true indged, there is a filial Fear of God as a
 Father, and of his Fatherly Displeasure, which is
 one of the principal Springs of Gospel Obedience;
 according to what you have, *Jer. xxxii. 40. I*
will put my Fear in their Hearts, that they shall not
depart from me: But there is vast Difference be-
 tween this, and a slavish Fear of Hell and eternal
 Damnation; there is as great a Difference between
 the one and the other, as between the Fear that a
 loving Child has to an affectionate Father, and
 the Fear that a condemned Criminal or Malefactor
 has of his Judge: The one is driven to Obedience
 through Terror, but the other is drawn to Obe-
 dience through Love. I do not deny but a Child
 of God, through the Prevelaney of Temptation,
 Desertion, or Unbelief, may come to be under such
 a Spirit of Bondage; but then it is not his Privi-
 ledge, but his Punishment. And in so far as the
 Child of God is acted in his Obedience by a *Spirit*
of Bondage unto Fear, his Obedience is legal; For,
 when he acts like himself, like a Believer indeed,
 he

he serves the Lord without Fear, without slavish
Fear of Hell and Wrath, in Holiness and Righteous-
ness all the Days of his Life, Luke 1. 74, 75. 4thly,
 When a Man performs good Works, to procure a
 Right and Title to Heaven and Glory. For, as
 I was saying, our Title comes only by Jesus Christ;
 Christ is the First Heir of Eternal Life, and we are
joint Heirs with him. But ye may say, Are we not
 told, *Rev. xxii. 14. Blest are they that do his Com-*
mandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of
Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the Ci-
ty? For clearing this to you, you would know,
 that there is a two-fold Right to Right to Glory,
 which is the Thing there spoken of, to wit, a legal
 and an evidential Right. *First* I say, there is a
 legal or a Law Right. You know the Title to
 Life and Glory was forfeited by the Breach of the
 Law in the first *Adam*; and it must be recovered
 again by a perfect Obedience unto the Law: And
 whose Obedience can do this, but the Obedience
 of Christ imputed to us for Righteousness? So
 that, I say, we come to have our Law-right
 and Title to Glory, and other Blessings, on-
 ly recovered in Christ, and by the Imputation
 of his Righteousness to us, whereby *the Law is*
magnified and made honourable. But, *2dly,* There is
 a Right of Evidence, whereby our Right, through
 Christ, is evidenced, and cleared up to our own
 Souls: And this is the Right that I conceive is
 spoke of in the Scripture last mentioned; They
 that do his Commandments, and yield Obedience
 out of Gospel-principles and Motives, they give
 Evidence of their Right through Christ to Heaven
 and Glory; *and they shall enter in through the*
Gates unto the City of the new Jerusalem: But to
 make

make our own Obedience, our own Holiness or good Works, the Ground and Foundation of our Claim to the Glories of Heaven, is grossly legal and Popish. Thus I say, Study to beware of doing good Works, out of legal Motives and Principles; for these are like the dead Flie, that makes the Apothecary's Ointment to stink. My last Advice is, Study to yield Obedience, out of Gospel Principles, Ends and Motives. I shall not enlarge upon these, because they were hinted at already. Obey and do good Works, with an Eye to the Glory of God, out of a Principle of Gratitude unto him that has bought you with his Blood; and yield Obedience, that in this Way ye may maintain Fellowship and Communion with God. 'Tis the Man *who hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart, who hath not lifted up his Soul to Vanity, nor sworn deceitfully, that shall stand in God's holy Hill, and have a Place in his Tabernacle.* The Duties of Obedience, they are like Waggon's or Chariots, which bring the Soul to Christ, and the Embraces of his Love, though they be not the procuring or meritorious Cause of the least Blink of the Lord's Countenance. And then, to conclude, study the Duties of Obedience, not that ye may obtain a Title to Heaven, which is the Fruit of the Redeemer's Purchase: But that ye may attain an Aptitude and *Meetness* for *partaking of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: For though there be no Connexion of Merit, yet there is a Connexion of Congruity and Suitableness between begun Holiness here, and consummate Holiness hereafter. 'Tis among the irreversible Decrees of Heaven, that unholy, unsanctified Sinners, continuing so, shall never enter into the Kingdom of God. *No unclean Thing shall ever enter.*

enter the Gates of the new Jerusalem. And therefore beware of thinking, that when we lead you to Christ, as the only Foundation of your Title to eternal Life, thereby we encourage any in a Way of Sin or Unholiness; No, the Grace of God in this Gospel teacheth us better Things, namely, to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to walk soberly, righteously and godly in this present World.

F I N I S.



